

Echoes of Religious Thought.

BY W. K. AZBILL.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." That is, be superior to the provocations of evil words and evil deeds of vicious persons, as one who is wholly of a different spirit.

"Be ye angry, but sin not; let not the sun go down on thy wrath." This implies that it is not wrong, but that it is hazardous to be angry. On one occasion Jesus Christ looked around on his assailants with anger; but he spoke to them with the utmost moderation.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men," says the Apostle. By which he seems to admit that it is not always possible to avoid painful differences. But the injunction requires the utmost concession and patience with those even who vex us most.

"If a man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also," has always been regarded as a hard precept to follow. Jesus illustrated this teaching when, on his trial before the High Priest, a soldier smote him on the face. He said: "If I have spoken evil, (they were before a court) testify of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" There is not the slightest suggestion of ill will in this response to one of the sorest provocations a prisoner was ever obliged to bear.

There are these two ways at least of viewing "the progress of revelation." 1. That the all-views embracing thoughts of God, expressed in olden times in the best available means of expressing thought, are daily coming more and more within the comprehension of mankind, as godly persons, through knowledge and experience gradually approach the divine point of view. 2. That the Holy Spirit, dwelling within godly people from age to age, is giving to mankind, 'here a little and there a little,' such notions as are adapted to the wants of the race at each step of its progress—revelations which are to supersede other revelations that have served their purpose and their day. The first view seems to be in better accord with the omniscience of God, the nature of man, and the known history of the progress of religious thought.

The Rev. C. B. Pitblado, pastor of one of the leading Presbyterian churches in Winnipeg, Canada now in Honolulu on his return from India, China and Japan, having visited the missions of his own denomination, especially in India, and having made careful inquiries into the work of missionaries, bears testimony to the great improvement

in sentiments touching Christianity. In towns and villages where a few years ago the Evangelists were refused admission, they are now welcomed by the natives; and in Government official reports where their work was in the beginning sneered at, there are now frequent kind and most favorable references to the salutary results of their preaching and their charitable institutions.

Dr. Briggs still manages to keep himself in the storm-center of ecclesiastic controversy. His ordination to the priesthood of the Episcopal church is provoking as much contention as did his occupancy of a Professor's chair in the Theological Seminary. The confusing and misleading thing in all this Brigg's literature is the side issue which has been the same from the first, and which causes nine-tenths of the irritation, namely, as to whether the Doctor is right in forcing himself into the position of a representative of men and women who do not think as he thinks. After all that has been written about liberty of conscience and freedom of thought and of speech, it is doubtful if many opponents of his could be found who really wish to abridge his liberty as a thinker. What they do object to is that he shall pose as an accredited teacher in their communion, since his ideas do not fairly represent the ideas of the constituency in whose name he proposes to sit in the class-room or to stand in the pulpit.

The Church and Marriage.

The indecent haste of certain prominent New York society people in getting married again immediately after being divorced, and the readiness with which the courts grant divorces to those in the "upper-tendom," has recently called forth a storm of indignation from the religious press of America. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews alike condemn the prevailing disregard for marriage bonds; and the need of a uniform law in the United States regulating marriage and divorce, is dwelt on in many of the papers. The moral right of divorced persons to marry other persons than those from whom they are divorced is discussed with reference to the New Testament injunction, "Let them be reconciled, etc.," or "let them remain unmarried;" and even the *Reform Advocate* (Jewish, Chicago), refers to such marriages as "in open contravention of the higher law of morality." It is also charged that ministers of religion are not sufficiently careful to inquire into the propriety of solemnizing marriages in doubtful cases.

Minister for Kona.

Five years ago Miss Alice Beard came from her home in Modesto, California, to Honolulu; and, identifying herself with the Christian Church in this city, she rendered valuable service in the Sunday school and otherwise. After two years she went to North Kona for a change and rest, and seeing the need of Christian work there, she undertook to start and maintain a Sunday school. The work began there grew upon her hands, and with the aid of certain contributions from members of the Honolulu church and the willing-hearted in Kona, but chiefly with her own means, she erected a house of worship and built a mission cottage. About a year ago she brought out from Japan an evangelist and his wife to labor among those of his own nation on the plantations where she adequately supported him. Now through her liberality, the Rev. F. M. Snodgrass, of Kimberley Heights, Tenn., who arrived on the *Doric* last week, is now on his way to take charge of this mission and as it is the first permanent outpost of the Honolulu congregation of Disciples, the church and Miss Beard are to be congratulated upon the immediate prospect of regular and persistent work in this increasingly important field.

Pro and Con.

A "Dictionary of the Bible," intended to take the place of "Smith's Bible Dictionary" whose articles were written by conservative scholars, is being published in Edinburgh under the management of James Hastings, editor of *The Expository Times*. Prof. J. W. McGarvey, President of The Bible College in Kentucky University, reprints a commendatory notice of the new work in his "Biblical Criticisms," and paraphrases it as follows:

"With such a work as this in his library, a minister will find himself pretty well equipped for the study of the Bible. It is the kind of a book that is valuable in the library of a student of the Bible, and we most heartily commend it to that class. It is a compendium of the latest and most reliable information on Biblical themes, by the ablest scholars, who have availed themselves of the results of modern researches. Higher praise than this would be difficult to give to such a work."

"I would amend this commendation by saying, It is a compendium of the latest and *unreliable* information on Biblical themes, by able scholars who have accepted the *conjectures* of modern rationalistic writers. It is the kind of a book that ought *not* to be in a preacher's library, unless he has carefully studied modern criticism, and has learned how to distinguish between the true and the false on the subject."

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